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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 5, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE  
THEMES:

HEADLINES  
BRIEFING  
EDITORIAL OPINION  
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#### HEADLINES

##### MASS APPEAL

FM Gul's shuttle diplomacy -- Israel, Palestine, Syria -  
Aksam  
Arab press display interest in Gul visit to Israel -  
Hurriyet  
PM Erdogan says Turkey has no hidden designs on Mosul -  
Sabah  
Governor of Baghdad assassinated - Milliyet  
Sunnis want Iraqi elections postponed - Aksam  
Turkish Red Crescent takes \$400,000 to tsunami victims -  
Hurriyet  
Oil-rich Arabs 'stingy' in helping tsunami-stricken regions  
- Vatan

##### OPINION MAKERS

FM Gul: Turkey ready to contribute to efforts for Middle  
East peace - Cumhuriyet  
Israel gives Gul bloody welcome: Israelis kill 7 in  
Palestine - Cumhuriyet  
Zarkawi's group kills governor of Baghdad - Radikal  
Another Turkish trucker killed in Iraq - Zaman  
Iraqi intelligence chief: 200,000 rebels fighting in Iraq -  
Cumhuriyet  
Israel kills 7 children - Yeni Safak  
Israeli tank fire kills 7 children - Radikal  
German official: Al-Qaeda has trained 70,000 militants -  
Cumhuriyet  
Bush to renew image: US increases aid for tsunami victims -  
Cumhuriyet  
16 Turks still missing in South Asia - Cumhuriyet  
Aceh is left to die - Yeni Safak

#### BRIEFING

FM Gul in Israel: Visiting Turkish FM Abdullah Gul met  
Israeli leaders Tuesday in an effort to repair strained ties  
between the two countries. Gul carried with him a goodwill  
message from Syria. Gul was received by President Moshe  
Katsav before meeting with FM Silvan Shalom, PM Ariel  
Sharon, and Labor party leader Shimon Peres. 'We need to  
put all the tension behind us, because there is a new  
atmosphere in the region,' Gul said. 'Now is not the time  
to criticize. We must look at positive things,' Gul told  
Israel's 'Haaretz' daily in an interview published on  
Tuesday. 'In my estimation, the Syrians are serious and  
their intentions are good,' Gul told 'Haaretz,' adding that  
'they want to take part in the peace process, they are ready  
to resume talks without preconditions, and they expect a  
positive Israeli response.' Papers report that the Israelis  
gave a cool response to the Turks' proposal for mediation,  
urging Turkey to first help in bringing an end to terrorism  
supported by Syria and Palestinians. The Israeli side also  
reportedly rejected the idea of short-term talks with Syria,  
preferring instead to concentrate efforts on the  
'Palestinian track.' The Israeli side encouraged Turkey to  
play an active role in Gaza following the planned withdrawal  
by Israeli forces. According to 'Sabah,' the Turkish role  
could include training, reconstruction, political and  
security reforms, and participation in a local peacekeeping  
force. In a joint news conference with his Israeli  
counterpart, Gul said: 'Bilateral relations with Israel are  
already very good. Our trade volume has reached \$2  
billion.' Gul noted that Turkey is the second most popular  
destination in the world, drawing about 300,000 tourists  
last year. 'The friendship between the two countries is  
solid,' Gul said. Gul was accompanied on his trip by a  
large delegation of Turkish businessmen and lawmakers. On  
Wednesday, Gul will meet with Palestinian leaders, including

FM Nabil Shaath, PM Ahmed Qorei and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader Mahmud Abbas, who is widely expected to win next Sunday's presidential election. The FM's visit to Israel is expected to pave the way for a visit to the region by PM Erdogan later in the year. Meanwhile, Islamist-oriented "Zaman" reports State Department Spokesman Adam Ereli's comments calling for Turkey to contribute to ensuring the end of attacks by terrorist groups operating in areas under Palestinian control.

US-Turkey-Iraq security meeting to take place in Ankara: US State Department Undersecretary William Burns told Turkish officials during his recent visit that there are options other than a military operation that could diminish the PKK terrorist threat in Iraq, "Cumhuriyet" reports. Turkish, American and Iraqi officials are to meet in Ankara January 11 to discuss ways to address the terrorist presence in northern Iraq. A large US delegation is expected to visit Ankara for the meetings next week, according to "Cumhuriyet."

Turkish truck driver killed in Iraq: A Turkish truck driver was killed in an ambush north of Baghdad on Tuesday, papers report. The Turkish trucker, whose identity was not immediately available, was reportedly working under contract with the US military. Thus far, 79 Turks have lost their lives in Iraq in ambushes or at the hands of hostage takers.

Possible Cabinet Revision: The press continues to circulate reports that PM Erdogan intends to shuffle his cabinet, perhaps even as early as today. "Cumhuriyet" speculates that four ministers, including Defense Minister Gonul, could leave the Cabinet, and at least 2-3 other ministers could switch positions. Some predict that the Prime Minister will present a new Cabinet list to President Sezer in a meeting scheduled to take place this afternoon at the Presidential Palace.

New Turkish penal code brings jail terms for politicians speaking in Kurdish: Recent amendments to the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), which were enacted swiftly before the EU summit in December, include a provision that carries a prison sentence of up to 20 years for politicians who speak in Kurdish during election campaigns, "Cumhuriyet" claims. Some articles in the new penal code constitute a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights, according to the report.

Debates on a presidential regime for Turkey: The ruling AK Party has come under fire in the press for backing a shift to a semi-presidential form of government. "Cumhuriyet" quotes critics of the proposal, who say that such a system could bring a more authoritarian form of government to Turkey.

US Embassy in Sofia 'saves' fugitive Turkish businessman: Turkish police are expected to demand from Bulgaria the extradition of Yahya Murat Demirel, a Turkish businessman who had been on trial for embezzlement. Demirel, who lives under a travel ban because of his ongoing court case, was detained in Bulgaria over the weekend for illegally entering the country. Islamist-oriented "Yeni Safak" claims that the US Embassy in Sofia intervened to secure the release of Demirel's wife, Aysenur Esenler, who is allegedly a US citizen.

#### EDITORIAL OPINION:

? US-Turkish Relations  
? The US and Tsunami Relief  
? The Ukraine Election  
"Adjustments and Common Interests With the US"  
Sami Kohen observed in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (01/05):  
"Turkey-US relations need to be adjusted based on the two countries' common interests. We should be aware that Turkey and the US are currently not on the same frequency. In fact, they're not even close to each other as they were during the Cold War. New problems surfaced (the Kurdish establishment in Northern Iraq, the continued PKK presence, for example) that pushed Turkey and the US apart. How could the needed adjustments be made? There needs to be dialogue, of course. But first, both sides should consider some basic points. The US should accept the fact that many things have changed in Turkey. These changes include Ankara's unhappiness with US policies, as expressed at the official level, and the spread of Anti-American feeling among the Turkish people. Turkey should accept the reality of US interest and activity in this region and try to solve problems with the US as an ally rather than by showing its constant displeasure. The visit of the US Deputy Secretary of State to Ankara can be considered as a step on this path. Although no concrete result came out of the visit, but the decision to continue to meet and discuss gives us hope that a new process - that will be based on common interests -- is on the way."

"The Tsunami is more Photogenic than Fallujah"

Meral Tamer wrote in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (01/05):

"The numbers roll across the bottom of the screen - 94,102 dead in Indonesia, 29,729 dead in Sri Lanka, 9,479 dead in India, 5,187 dead in Thailand. And constantly we are told that the numbers can always go higher! In recent days there has been a rush for TV ratings in coverage of the tsunami. Television around the world continues to show the same images -- the bloated bodies, the dead boy wedged up against orange crates. If someone is looking for swollen bodies, we have more than we could possibly want in Fallujah - bodies that lay in the streets like that for weeks. But Fallujah isn't as photogenic as South Asia. It doesn't give good pictures. Even their outfits aren't as colorful as they are in Asia - so monotonous and dreary! And what can we say about the assistance comedy? The US administration, after a 9.0 earthquake, managed to collect 1 million dollars in private donations. How quickly has it been forgotten that 13 billion dollars were sent to the state of Florida following the three hurricanes that struck there last year? After pressure from the UN and international aid organizations, the Bush Administration announced that it would raise its assistance to 15 million, then to 35 million dollars. Then the braintrust of the Bush administration got a bright idea. According to an article in "The New York Times," the US now thinks that, thanks to the tsunami, it may be able to repair the negative and shocking images it has created for itself in Iraq. The US Administration, by leaving the UN out, could perhaps form a South Asia Assistance Team and, through an effort similar to the Marshall Plan, regain some of its lost prestige. So the Bush Administration started throwing money around, raising its assistance contribution to 350 million dollars. In coming days, I won't be surprised to see on my television screen the image of tender-hearted American soldiers lowering assistance packages to victims. Be prepared for TV images of US soldiers springing out of the American naval fleet to bandage the wounded and give milk to little babies, and for assistance packages with US flags to be dropped from US planes. We're in the media age! Images are everything! Looking at it from the humanitarian perspective, in this kind of universal disaster that calls for a blank check for unlimited assistance, the two-facedness of the 'civilized' human being has come out immediately. There were even those who were inconvenienced by the fact that this natural disaster fell during the New Year's holiday. Because US President Bush and his sidekick, Tony Blair, were on holiday, they were only able to comprehend the situation after a delay of 3 days."

"A Troublesome Election"

Zafer Atay commented in the economic-political "Dunya" (01/05): "Moscow has not yet let go of Ukraine, even though it has been an independent country for more than 10 years. The reasons for this are obvious. Ukraine has valuable resources for Russia, especially in the energy sector. Eighty percent of the natural gas Moscow sells to Europe, including to Turkey, is transported through Ukraine. So far, all governments in Ukraine have managed to maintain good relations with Russia. Yushchenko also kept these good relations with Russia during his time in the Ukrainian government. Sensing the public resentment against Russia, however, during the presidential campaign Yushchenko promised to move Ukraine closer to the west and to apply for NATO and EU membership. Naturally, this stance has angered the Kremlin. There was even an attempt to kill Yushchenko by poisoning him. In short, Russia, which has already lost many of its former republics to NATO and the EU, does not want to lose Ukraine as well. In order to melt the ice with Russia, Yushchenko has announced that his first official visit after he is sworn in will be to Moscow. But even this announcement has not managed to soften up Putin."

EDELMAN